

DEPARTMENT OF STATE

ASSISTANT SECRETARY

January 9, 1959

TO: The Secretary

THROUGH: S/S *WWS*
G - Mr. Murphy *SM*

FROM: EUR - Mr. Merchant *JH* 762.000

SUBJECT: Possible Congressional Resolution on Berlin

EUR has given consideration to the question of a possible Congressional resolution on Berlin in the light of the discussion of the subject which took place at your meeting this morning. We would offer the following comments:

(1) So far as our posture vis-a-vis the Soviet Union is concerned we believe that the Soviet leaders are already impressed by the bipartisan nature of the support of the US Government position on Berlin. We believe that this has been impressed on their minds by recent visitors such as Senator Humphrey and Adlai Stevenson, by the Vice President's emphasis on the subject in his talk with Mr. Mikoyan, and perhaps above all by the strong position taken by the labor leaders in their luncheon with Mr. Mikoyan. Judging by press reports the same impression of practical unanimity of view is being given to Mr. Mikoyan in many of his other contacts around the country.

(2) This Soviet estimate of bi-partisanship would be confirmed and reinforced by a strong Congressional resolution on Berlin if such resolution could be obtained without difficulty and with essentially unanimous support. However, the estimate might actually be weakened if there were long debate with substantial differences of view or if there were any serious defection in support.

(3) It would be important to limit the resolution and so far as possible the discussion to the Berlin issue itself, though this might be very difficult to accomplish. There is some division of sentiment in Congress with

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respect to Germany as a whole--disengagement, German rearmament--and we could expect differences which might emerge in debate to be exploited by Moscow.

(4) If a resolution is sought, we would suggest that it be made as simple as possible and take the line that the Congress* of the United States must not let down the more than two million West Berliners by any default on its responsibility to protect their freedom.

(5) Our Allies, to judge by the Western European press and other indications, probably have a much lower estimate of the strength of bi-partisan support for foreign policy than do the Russians. Thus a strong bi-partisan resolution on Berlin might be more important as a backup to our dealings with them than with respect to the Russians themselves.

Concurrences:

WM
H - Mr. Macomber

"In view of the above and of my report to you on my initial soundings on the Hill, I believe the next step would be to get a draft and see what it looks like." - Mr. Macomber

* I doubt it should do such
just this way but rather have
the NSC would propose to do

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